

Liberating Ourselves In the Boudoir

an Anarchist-Feminist Perspective Against BDSM



*For a Healthy Society and for Healthy Sex!
Positive Sex for the Sex-Positive!*



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Preface to This Edition

This zine is a collaboration between a handful of individuals who are opposed to BDSM. We have decided to rework and republish this zine for a number of reasons.

First, we share the original author's disappointment at the unending stream of positive thoughts and writings on the issue, and his despair at the lack of negative critique. We similarly share the author's upset at the number of safer spaces- collective houses, infoshops, and the like- in which BDSM is accepted and openly flaunted. We're tired of having our voices marginalized, our opinions and feelings silenced, our boundaries laughed at, made fun of, ignored.

We're also pleased to rewrite and republish this zine to provide a variety of new voices and experiences to add to the original author's. The author devotes some space in the original edition to his background, heritage, experiences, politics, and so on. He states that part of his purpose in writing this zine is to reach out to other marginalized voices, to give a voice to the many others who stay (or are kept) quiet about this topic.

We are some of those voices, and we represent a much wider range of background, experience, sex, age, and so forth. Like the original author, we too believe there are many other folks who hold these views whose voices are silenced or marginalized. We seek to add our voices to his in the hopes that others will feel safer and more supported in speaking out.

We have lastly decided to republish this to take some of the bite, the sarcasm and anger bordering on hatred, out of the original text. Where we have changed the text, we have sought to soften the anger in the original while preserving the original message.

We hope that this zine encourages critical thought and dialogue, while conveying the original message in a less hostile way. Toward a world without domination!

- The Authors

Final Thoughts

We hope this zine has shed some insight into a variety of dissenting opinions on the issue of BDSM. We also hope that it inspires discussion- friendly, non-violent discussion!- among radicals and non-radicals alike.

We also hope that we've succeeded in making this zine less fierce than the original, and less geared toward personal attacks. We have tried to make this zine about the subject, and not about attacking people and their personal choices. We also understand that there are exceptions to every rule, that the arguments we have made herein don't necessarily apply universally.

We want to state finally that we are not sex-negative! This is yet another insult slung at several of the authors by folks who are into BDSM- such rhetoric is so hurtful and unnecessary. Quite to the contrary, everyone involved in the making of this edition of this zine identifies as sex-positive. We love sex! And it is largely because we love sex and want to have and encourage healthy sexual interactions that we have put this zine together.

Thanks for reading.



[anarchists/feminists] be fighting against domination in all forms, in all aspects of our lives?" This person's comment was intentionally censored by the moderators and deleted without any response or explanation, dialogue about the question was disallowed. In a similar vein, others of the authors have been denied and shut down when they request that spaces (infoshops mostly) carry literature that opposes BDSM, when these same spaces carry a variety of information praising such acts.

Even this zine itself, in other editions, has elicited linguistic violence and hostility. Emails from those who practice BDSM- even though the intent of this zine is not to attack people- have been full of violent language, threats, sarcasm, polemics.

All of these examples are unsurprising to us, as we believe that violence, censorship, domination, subjection, hierarchy, and oppression underlie BDSM and arise as a result of it.

Along with the language (and linguistic censorship and control) exhibited by BDSM practitioners comes a set of behaviors and attitudes that are similarly disturbing.

Often, in the shared experience of the authors, those who enjoy BDSM initiate such acts, or similar bedroom behaviors, without asking and with the assumption that everyone enjoys such things. This manifests itself commonly in physical aggressiveness, even violence, and the authors have experienced both.

Certainly, not everyone who partakes of BDSM disrespects such boundaries. However, it is unsurprising to us that many do, because of the aggression and violence underlying the history and practice of BDSM. We cannot and do not endorse any set of behaviors that brings about such aggression, such disrespect for personal boundaries.

Introductory Thoughts

We understand as we begin writing this zine that we're going to upset a lot of folks- people seldom like to hear opinions that contradict or oppose their behaviors. Besides that, we know well from personal experience that we're the minority on this issue. And this subject matter seems to evoke a rare and aggressive vehemence in people- particularly radicals- that other realms of conversation do not.

We chose to write this zine because we are tired of being persecuted for *not* having interest in BDSM and all it entails. We're writing this because we're discouraged by the near-ubiquity of positive thoughts and words on the matter, We feel beaten down by being constantly bombarded by people's stories of "kinky" sexual conquest. We tire of visiting "safer spaces" (those apparently devoted to abolishing oppressive speech and action and making everyone feel safe and comfortable), and being subject to bondage stories, domination fantasies.

To be upfront, we're writing this because we think the various behaviors encouraged by BDSM are necessarily oppressive, and we find it difficult to understand how so many anarchists and feminists we meet tout these acts as "hot," and even worse, as "liberating." And we're writing this because we know there are many others out there who also find the actions and mindsets of BDSM uncomfortable and disquieting, but are too afraid to speak up because it's accepted (in radical circles and in the dominant culture) as a given and wonderful aspect of human sexuality. *Everybody does it, something must be wrong with me, I must be boring.* We want these men, women, and others to be able to speak up without fear of reprisal or rejection, just as we hope to do.

All too often, conversations from which all involved should benefit are instead battlefields in which all parties are trying to "win." This

aspect of the dominant culture manifests itself in all of us from time to time, even those of us who work toward non-coercive, healthy communication. As such, we want to state that we have no desire to "win" this discussion. This zine is not meant as a personal attack, nor a letter or condemnation, nor a moral indictment, but as a critique of the subject itself.

We also want to state that we understand that like-minded adults can do whatever they want in private, and we don't intend to tell anyone what they can and can't do. Again, this is not a personal attack; this is a critique.

And as a critique, we *do* intend to attack the BDSM itself, as a set of behaviors, a set of ideas and attitudes, as a civilized tradition and symptom of civilization, as a reflection of oppression, patriarchy, and violence, and- to borrow a term from Derrick Jensen- as a *toxic mimic* of healthy adult human sexuality.

Describing & Defining BDSM

BDSM is a complex acronym embodying a number of words and practices. Extracted completely this includes bondage, discipline, domination, submission, sadism, and masochism. Quite a mouthful. Let's look at each of these individually, just to make clear what we're talking about.

Bondage is a the act of being bound (or binding others, in the case of those in "dominant" roles), usually, though not always, for sexual pleasure. It is also sometimes known as *vincilagnia*, from the Latin meaning "the lust to be bound with chains." The practice of bondage involves an expansive arsenal of paraphernalia, including chains, ropes, collars, gags and bits (like those used on domesticated animals), handcuffs, straitjackets, leather and latex clothes, thumb cuffs, St. Andrew's crosses (large, x-shaped racks), slings, tape, and a number of other devices.

This is problematic. Here are some real-world examples:

The word "vanilla"-meaning a person who doesn't engage in BDSM, or sex that doesn't include BDSM- gets thrown around a lot. The implications are that only BDSM is enjoyable and that those who don't find it appealing (or those who find it appalling) are boring.

More to the point, several of the authors have been called boring by sexual partners because they didn't wish to engage in certain BDSM-related behaviors. One person was even called a "prude".

The use of such language is incredibly hurtful. Those of us who've been called such words don't feel like we're boring at all, and it's unfair and dominating of BDSM-minded folks to monopolize the fun, variety, and beauty of sex. Further, when words like "boring" and "prude" are used maliciously during sex, they can be coercive. Some folks who're into BDSM probably don't mind coercion here and there, but we do, and we don't want to feel we have to indulge "kinks" when they make us uncomfortable.

As if the use of such language is not enough, certain folks who defend BDSM are so hostile and coercive with their words that they silence anyone who dissents. We (the authors) have all experienced this in varying degrees but in great quantity.

This occurs most often in individual conversations. All of us have been shouted down, silenced, marginalized, and invalidated by BDSM practitioners because we disagree with or oppose these behaviors on political or ethical grounds. This is incredibly discouraging and disempowering.

This also occurs in broader contexts. One of the authors once posted to an online infoshop message-board, questioning the carrying of BDSM-positive materials by asking, "Shouldn't we

responsibility. Instead of freeing our minds, taking action when action is called for, and seeking to attain our own happiness, now, in the *real world*, we trust in god to take care of us, make decisions for us, guide our lives. Rather than removing ourselves entirely from capitalist economies and making all of our own necessities, we make the most responsible, freedom-loving choices when we go shopping. When our kids could be learning naturally as children do, we send them to government schools in hopes that they'll get good jobs.

We've all seen through this obvious nonsense, we're all fighting hard against such clouded, insane doublethink and the systems that bring it about. And yet, many still think BDSM will free them. As long as we practice capturing, binding, enslaving, silencing, flogging, torturing, dominating, submitting, berating, humiliating, and otherwise abusing one another, we're all free and liberated and happy. As long as we imitate the social and political structures destroying our lives and minds and bodies and the world, we're free of those things. The authors find this hard to believe.

Language & Attitudes of the "Kinky" Toward Those of Us Who Aren't

The authors of this edition have decided to add this section due to a variety of hurtful, negative personal experiences we've all endured. We intend it to be a critique and also a statement of personal validation.

As we discussed before, those who're into BDSM have an entire language of their own. This language often manifests itself in negative, hostile, coercive ways toward others, especially toward those of us not into BDSM. Similarly, folks who engage in these behaviors sometimes manifest the underlying violence and dominance in the sexual behaviors in their actions and attitudes toward others.

Discipline is pretty self-explanatory. It usually involves a "dom," or dominant party, disciplining a "sub," or submissive party. This can come in the form of commands, bondage, whipping, hot wax, physical blows, humiliation (such as licking the soles of the dominant party's shoes, or demeaning the submissive verbally), and so on.

Domination and submission are equally self-defining. Domination is the act of dominating, submission the act of submitting. In a sexual context, this can include a variety of behavior, but is generally characterized by two polarized roles: "dom," or dominant, and "sub," or submissive. Dominant people sometimes also use the term "top," while submissives occasionally use the word "bottom" in place of dom and sub. "Switch" describes those who alternate between roles.

Sadism is the act of inflicting pain, torment, or humiliation upon another to achieve sexual gratification. Masochism, quite similarly, is the act of *receiving* pain, torment, or humiliation to gain pleasure. Because they so often go together, these terms are collectively known as *sadomasochism*. The term sadism was inspired by the life and writings of Donatien Alphonse Francois de Sade, better known as the Marquis de Sade. The term is well-deserved, as the Marquis lived a life of extremely abusive, violent, painful sexuality, and was on more than one occasion imprisoned by the austere French authorities for his actions (we're not encouraging this at all!).

Masochism is derived from Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, who wrote many works including the 1869 novel *Venus in Furs*. Sacher-Masoch was also a socialist, philosemite (an opponent of discrimination against Jews), and, in his later years, a feminist. It seems BDSM has been common in radical circles for quite a long time...

A Brief History of BDSM

The origins of BDSM are not definitively agreed upon. The Cult of Orthia, one of the most important religions of ancient Sparta (one of the most violent, slave-driven, dominant, militaristic societies of all time), performed ritual flagellation called *diamastigosis*- on a regular basis. The *Tomba della Fustigazione*, or Flogging Grave, is an Etruscan burial site in Tarquinia dating to the sixth century BCE that depicts quite graphically the whipping of a woman by two male-bodied figures with whom she's having sex. The writings of the Roman authors Juvenal and Petronius both contain references to flagellation for pleasure.

Many Roman rituals have also contributed to the origins of BDSM. One of the most notable characteristics of the Roman holiday *Saturnalia* was the exchanging of roles- the exchanging of *power*- between master and slave. Perhaps even more obvious is the Roman holiday *Lupercalia*, during which sacrifices were made, thongs cut from the hides of the victims, and young men, dressed in the hides of the sacrificed animals, chased women through the streets whipping them to ensure fertility and to ease the pain of childbirth. Though it is not nearly as blatant a mingling of violence, death, dominance, and sexuality, *Lupercalia's* tradition of flagellation lives on in certain Christian Easter Monday whippings.

Of course, flagellation is by no means an exclusively Roman or pagan phenomenon. In the tumultuous European medieval era, Christian flagellants practiced the "mortification of flesh" that has come to illustrate their way of life. Although sexuality is absent in the rituals of Christian flagellants, dominance and submission, sadomasochism, a life of mental bondage and vassalage to God, body hatred, physical discipline (flagellants were called *disciplinati* in Italian), and public humiliation are omnipresent. The practice of ritual Christian flagellation is much less common today than it was in the middle ages, but the legacy of Christian BDSM lives on in the dominant society.

These include SSC- safe, sane, and consensual- and RACK- risk aware consensual kink. But these clever titles completely ignore the historical roots and modern linkages of BDSM to just about all that is tremendously bad in the world. Sex involving BDSM can hide behind as many clever acronyms as it wants, but it's still hierarchy, it's still domination, it's still slavery. And those who consent to slavery, domination, and hierarchy are helping these things thrive just as much as the slavers, dominators, and patriarchs/matriarchs. Willingly engaging in such things doesn't sound too safe or sane to us.

It's exactly this kind of language and attitude that makes BDSM a toxic mimic of healthy love and sex. Clever lingo disguising horrors underneath the surface is a technique as old as the oppressive forces who use it.

Military officials insist that Our Glorious Empire's wars abroad are liberating people. Liberals demand angrily that voting is responsible and will free us if only we'll all vote the right way. The hordes of religious zealots here and elsewhere insist that obedience, worship, prostration, loyalty, and the complete revocation of personal choice and responsibility will bring us eternal happiness. When disaster strikes the Empire, our political leaders tell us to go shopping- that'll make everything alright. Instead of allowing and helping our kids to educate themselves, we send them to schools where their heads are filled with garbage and propaganda, because it's the responsible decision, the choice that will make them free people in a free country.

These examples all imitate actual responsibility and healthy adult decision making. Instead of allowing all people their autonomy, we conquer, err, liberate them and make their choices for them. Instead of abolishing all governments and governing ourselves, we continue to rely on Statist governments to make decisions for us; we continue voting to convince ourselves we have a voice, that we have

are the same devices used by those who “protect and serve” the dominant culture and its insane policies and practices by arresting, imprisoning, and enslaving those on lower rungs of the hierarchy. Of course, some people toss out the props and get straight to the point by donning the costumes of cops, businessmen, doctors, slave masters, and soldiers.

In the face of all of these arguments to the contrary, people who participate in BDSM still claim that it is liberating. If it's not liberating them from patriarchy, capitalism, fucked up childhoods, slavery, gender roles, groupthink, or the dark shadow of empire (which it absolutely isn't on all accounts), what the hell exactly is it liberating them from?

Radicals and, to a much greater degree, queer folks are two of the most vilified, persecuted groups of people in the world at present. We suspect, then, that due to constant abuse and due to constantly paying attention to just how abusive human folks can be, many queer and radical (and radical queer) individuals don't know how to express love and sexuality any other way than through violence and abuse, the language of the dominant culture.

In many cities and small towns that host an anarchist community, there are ongoing projects aimed at mental healing, mediating conflicts between people, healing our bodies from the poison of industrial society, groups working on healthy communication, and groups to help survivors of rape. And yet, there are few, if any, discussion groups aimed at rooting out the hierarchy, violence, and desire to lord over others in our sex lives. There is only positive affirmation- “ooh babys!” and “hell yeahs!” - toward a system of false freedom and continued constraint.

And there's a lot of rhetoric, too. People have invented a whole slew of sophisticated, gentle vocabulary to soften the image of BDSM.

Ritual flagellation is also present in several forms of Islam, and ritual whipping (for women) and spanking (for men) is present in Taoist temples.

More recently, in the Western world, there is an abundance of literature and artwork containing references to or full depictions of BDSM-related activities from the mid-1700s onward. Such prurient literature culminated, of course, in the writings of the previously mentioned Marquis de Sade and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch.

Many years after the writings of de Sade and Sacher-Masoch, BDSM finds influences in the gay male leather subculture, particularly in the U.S. The leather movement, now sometimes called “Old Guard Leather,” is one of the most potent influences on the attitudes and actions of modern BDSM, and its origins are perhaps the most patriarchal.

Leather culture came about in the period just following World War II, as soldiers returned home from the European and Pacific theaters. These soldiers became addicted to a life surrounded and defined by men, traditional “masculinity,” enforced structure and hierarchy, dominance and submission, discipline, extreme violence, servitude, and an atmosphere of command and obedience. Upon returning home, this morphed into a gay (that is, queer male, and *only* queer male) subculture involving all of the same traits. This subculture is arguably the most influential element in the formation of modern BDSM.

Thoughts & Arguments Against BDSM

As we mentioned before, we fully support the right and ability of two (or more) consenting adults to do whatever they want in private. But, as with all other behaviors and ideas, just because folks have (or *should* have) the right to do something doesn't mean that everyone else must like it or think it's good and *liberating*.

And we *don't* feel that BDSM is good and liberating, no matter how many people insist that it is (although we recognize that different things are liberating for different people). We also don't think that just because an action is consensual, it's necessarily good and healthy. People frequently consent- or *think* that they consent- to a variety of horrible, oppressive actions and activities. We have all witnessed this, and many of us have been subject to it.

So often when BDSM comes up in conversation, folks are quick to dismiss any rejection or questioning of BDSM by saying, "It's *consensual!*" The authors wonder if these people are truly consenting, or if they only believe that they are consenting because they've never questioned the ethics and attitudes underlying these actions. And if they have questioned such things, the authors wonder how a person can consent to domination, submission, and so on?

To drive the point home, we're going to mention a graphic example here. Some readers may wish to skip this section. In 2001, the horrifying and vomit-inducing story of Armin Meiwes and his victim Bernd Brandes, played out and came to light. Meiwes sought a victim on the internet, then found the willing Brandes. They then met, and Brandes consented (or believed he consented) to Meiwes fucking him, mutilating him (in the form of cutting off his penis, which they then ate together), slitting his throat and killing him, and subsequently eating his corpse. Is this type of behavior to be encouraged or praised as liberatory because it was consensual? Should we not examine the motives and socialization underlying such behavior, simply because the participants felt they were engaging in this behavior voluntarily and with consent? Meiwes used consent as part of his defense; does this mean he shouldn't be held accountable for his actions, or that we can't analyze and critically examine these events?

come along and sell them some punishment for being "bad little boys." These patriarchs are fully aware how awful their lives and actions are, maybe they're even aware how puerile and held back they are mentally, and they're totally willing to exchange their blood money for the hot commodity of poor powerless people to discipline them.

Surely, helping the rich and powerful get off in exchange for money only cements the idea in their head that they own the world, that they own all the people in it, and that they can buy whatever they want, even remonstrations and punishment for their misdeeds.

This brings up an entirely different aspect of BDSM needs discussion- that is, the consumerism and capitalism driving it and profiting from it. You name it, BDSM is all about buying and selling it: toys, props, absurd costumes, sex acts, professional domination, overpriced conventions and fetish balls, porn, porn, porn. We're sure there are folks out there who make all their own BDSM gear, but even so, BDSM is undeniably money-driven, money-making, money-oriented. Probably because in our society money is the same as *power*, and that's really what it's all about, isn't it?

The assorted miscellany available for BDSM "play" is pretty telling itself. Many of these "toys" are overt in their relationship to the multifarious onslaught of oppression. Hell, even calling these implements toys (when they are clearly made for less-than-playful means) demonstrates the kind of sophistry that must go on in the minds of folks who see BDSM as a freeing force. Bits and whips, to take two examples, have been used to drive animal slavery (including humans) for as long as domestication has existed. Among certain practitioners of BDSM chains and shackles- serious, heavy, transport-to-the-New-World shackles- are used as restraints. Does this even need discussing? And among others handcuffs, thumbcuffs, anklecuffs, and straitjackets predominate bedroom activities. These

One fellow likes being bound, whipped, spanked, humiliated, lambasted, and punched in the face- like, actually *punched* in the face- during sex.

Another friend loves being bound and silenced, she likes playing the role of a little girl being raped by an older man, she enjoys being strangled and cut during sex, and all of her romantic relationships are with older, overbearing, dominant men who keep her in mental slavery and emotional dependency to their abuse.

We could go on and on, but with each and every one of the folks we know who enjoy such things, the reasons seem clear. A repressed childhood of Catholic school and abusive male figures, being told as a young girl that masturbation is poison and you'll go to hell if god catches you doing it, a lifetime of gender confusion, the feeling of being held down and choked by the conditions of growing up, seeking retribution for one's patriarchal bullshit instead of seeking solutions and making amends: all of these things, and other forms of psycho-physical repression, manifest themselves in the pursuits and behaviors of BDSM.

We believe that most of the people who view BDSM as liberating don't realize that the power of these various oppressive institutions we've been discussing is actually *reinforced* by BDSM, as it also relies on and encourages the exchange of power. What this essentially means is that those who practice BDSM recognize that there is a power structure, really many overlapping hierarchies, in the dominant society. However, instead of battling these structures and actively seeking their annihilation, people fetishize *exchanging* power briefly in hopes of getting off. More often than not, those most interested in exchanging power are those *in power*. A quick glance at Craigslist or any other website advertising erotic "services" shows that there is an endless supply of wealthy (powerful) white (powerful) men (powerful) who can't wait for the next dominatrix to

This is an extreme example, to be sure, and we're certainly not suggesting that BDSM should be compared to the Meiwes' case. What we are getting at is that just because an action or behavior involves consent- or the illusion of informed consent- doesn't imply that the action is good, desirable, or liberating, and it certainly doesn't mean we can't think critically about the reasons underlying it.

Whether it is consensual or not, we see BDSM as oppressive, hierarchical, reflective and perpetuating of civilization, and as a poisonous charade of healthy, mutually beneficial love and/or sex. We find it difficult to understand how other folks feel differently,, although we acknowledge that many do.

To further this critique, we'd like to quote from a feminist blog, Angry For a Reason. User Twisty writes:

"Like it or lump it, BDSM *is* patriarchy, the whole patriarchy, and nothin' but the patriarchy, in a black latex nutshell. It is, I unwaveringly assert according to the Honor Code of the Blaming Spinsters, the eroticization of a vastly horrific social order that has, over the millennia, generated the suffering of untold millions, and against which I am sworn to vituperate.

BDSM's got it all: sex, power, rape, pain, dominance, submission, the *false pretext of freedom* [emphasis added], delusions of superiority, sublimation of the orgasm at all costs, *women who think it liberates them* [emphasis added again], a conservative orthodoxy, compulsory conformity, absurd, exaggerated gender roles, and a silly dress code. It is profoundly anti-feminist... anti-individual, and unattractive."

The conversation that follows the previous quotation is what we'd like to see a lot more of in anarchist and feminist circles. It can be viewed in full at:

<http://angryforareason.blogspot.com/2006/02/asalways.html>.

Most of the traits Twisty lists can also be applied to Civilization, and aptly so. BDSM is in every way tied to and a product of Civilization. There are few, if any, anthropological indications that the behaviors and mental atmospheres encouraged by BDSM existed in societies before the world was poisoned by pandemic empire. Considering the nature of civilized societies, it's not really surprising that BDSM is as common as it is.

During the last six thousand years as civilization has conquered and destroyed, its many defining characteristics have remained unchanged. A quick glance at any fallen or contemporary civilized society~ or a comprehensive look at civilization in its entirety as a 10,000-year-old social form~ reveals that they all depend on and benefit from slavery, violence, subjugation, mental and physical torture, imaginary guises of freedom and superiority, self-destruction and personal sacrifice of those not in power, domination and humiliation of those not in power, strict gender roles, compulsion in so many ways, power structures and established hierarchies ruling over every aspect of life, and discipline and punishment for rule-breakers. Sound familiar? BDSM incorporates all these habits, and the correlation between BDSM as a set of sexual behaviors and civilization as a social-lifeway are too many and too vast to ignore.

Throughout his works, author Derrick Jensen frequently alludes to oppressed peoples fetishizing and glorifying their own suffering in religious beliefs that reinforce the socio-political structures keeping them down. Many African slaves, for example, adopted Christianity, which teaches: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ (Ephesians 6:5-7)" and "If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land (Isaiah, 1:19)."

It might have uplifted the spirits of impoverished and beaten slaves, but adopting the religion of the imperial colonizers didn't do a bit of

good in terms of stopping slavery. In fact, it reinforced and strengthened slavery by codifying and glorifying (and promising reward for) a life of servitude and obedience.

BDSM is the same. As Twisty said, it is qualified in part by the "false pretext of freedom." It glorifies and eroticizes slavery and submissiveness, authority and subjugation, embarrassment and punishment, and promises "heaven" in the form of pleasure and release for its followers. Many who practice BDSM insist that it sets them free, but, like Christian dogma to slavery, how is BDSM stopping or even challenging the social and political institutions that keep us all imprisoned?

Twisty lists "women who think it liberates them" as one of the defining points of BDSM. We would extend this to men, transfolks, and genderless/genderqueer people, ending with *people* who think it liberates them. We certainly know many such people, and we're sure you do too.

We know a lot of folks who are into BDSM. Many of the friends and acquaintances we know who are into BDSM are victims of one or more of the previously listed symptoms of civilized life. Many of these same people and others we have encountered who claim to enjoy and find liberation in BDSM actively *perpetuate* the symptoms of civilization and empire. All of these folks, through their participation in a system that relies on and reinforces hierarchy and domination perpetuate these symptoms of unhealthy society.

It is by observing these friends and acquaintances who are into BDSM that we have come to doubt that BDSM is a natural and healthy part of human sexuality. Following below is a quick sampling of examples from said friends and acquaintances.